

**This Page Is Inserted by IFW Operations
and is not a part of the Official Record**

BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images may include (but are not limited to):

- **BLACK BORDERS**
- **TEXT CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES**
- **FADED TEXT**
- **ILLEGIBLE TEXT**
- **SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES**
- **COLORED PHOTOS**
- **BLACK OR VERY BLACK AND WHITE DARK PHOTOS**
- **GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS**

IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.

**As rescanning documents *will not* correct images,
please do not report the images to the
Image Problem Mailbox.**



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/891,007	06/25/2001	Mitchell V. Bruce	1676A1	9402

23342 7590 02/05/2003
KILPATRICK STOCKTON LLP
1001 WEST FOURTH STREET
WINSTON-SALEM, NC 27101

EXAMINER

KOCH, GEORGE R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1734

7

DATE MAILED: 02/05/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/891,007

Applicant(s)

BRUCE ET AL.

Examiner

George R. Koch III

Art Unit

1734

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 34-40 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 4.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-33, drawn to an apparatus, classified in class 118, subclass 694.
 - II. Claims 34-40, drawn to a method, classified in class 427, subclass 8.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

2. Inventions II and I are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process, such as coating strips or webs rather than filaments.
3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.
4. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and the search required for Group I is not required for Group II, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.
5. During a telephone conversation with Jason Link (Reg. 44,874) on November 19, 2002 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-33. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this

Office action. Claims 34-40 withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

6. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

7. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

8. Claim 8-9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is unclear what "the solution level" refers to in line 3 of claim 8 and in lines 2-3 of claim 9. Two solutions have been cited at this point, one in the first container and one in the second container. It appears in both cases that the applicant intended to recite "the solution level of the first container".

9. Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Art Unit: 1734

10. Claim 18 recites the limitation "the first container" in line 6. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. It appears that the confusion arises from the recitation of merely "a container" in line 5.

11. It is also noted that applicant reuses the phrase "the first container" in claim 19, line 2.

12. Claim 32 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is unclear what "the solution level" refers to in line 3 of claim 32. Two solution levels have been cited at this point, one in the local container and one in the auxiliary container. It appears in that the applicant intended to recite "the solution level of the local container".

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

13. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

14. Claims 1-3, 5-7 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Switall (US Patent 4,637,341).

Switall discloses an applicator capable of applying at least a partial coating of a solution to a filament comprising an applicator surface (either of item 12 or 14), a first container (item 24 or 26) operable to supply the solution (item 10) to the applicator surface, the volume of the solution of the container corresponding to a solution level in the container, a second container (item 22) operable to contain a supply of solution in fluid communication with the solution in the first container such that the solution in the second container has a solution level indicative of the solution level in the first container, and a detector (items 58 and 60) for determining the solution level within the second container, the detector operable to control an adjustment of the volume of the solution in the first container such that the solution level in the first container is maintained within a predetermined range of levels.

As to claim 2, Switall is capable of coating glass filaments with a glass fiber sizing composition.

As to claim 3, Switall's sensors are mechanical detectors.

As to claim 5, Switall discloses flow controller elements (items 42, 46, 48, 52, 50a, 54, and 50b as well as items 32, 38, 36, 40, 33, 33a, 33b, 37, 37a, and 37b) which is positioned between a source of the solution (items 16 and 18) to permit flow of the solution from the source to the first container, and wherein the detector is operable to generate a signal to the flow controller (via control console 62) to control the flow of the solution to the first container (see column 3, line 59 to column 4, line 37).

As to claim 6, the first container contains an overflow level (which can be defined as the top of either container 24 or 26), and a range of levels below the overflow level (which can be defined as the top of pipe entrances 56a and 56b, plus the levels of sensors 60 and 58). Alternatively, the top of pipe entrances 56a and 56b can be defined as the overflow levels, and the sensor levels 60 and 58 can be the range of levels below the overflow level (note that pipe entrances 56a and 56b lead to pipe 56, which empties into container 22 above the sensors 60 and 58).

As to claim 7, the overflow level, when interpreted as the absolute height of the container, is operable such that any solution exceeding the overflow level is prevented from returning to the first container by spilling out.

As to claim 27, Switall discloses an apparatus capable of supplying and applying at least a partial coating of a solution to a filament, comprising a main container (either items 16 or 18) which is operable to supply a solution, a local container (items 24 or 26) in fluid communication with the main container (via the auxiliary container and flow controllers described below) for receiving the solution from the main container, a volume of the solution in the local container corresponding to a solution level in the local container, an applicator surface (either of items 12 or 14) operable to receive the solution from the local container and capable of applying an at least partial coating of the solution on to a filament, an auxiliary container (item 22) operable to contain a supply of solution in fluid communication with the solution in the first container such that the solution in the auxiliary container has a solution level indicative of the solution level in the first container, flow controller elements (items 42, 46, 48, 52, 50a, 54, and 50b as

Art Unit: 1734

well as items 32, 38, 36, 40, 33, 33a, 33b, 37, 37a, and 37b) which is positioned between the main containers (items 16 and 18) and the local containers (items 24 and 26) to control the flow of the solution from the main containers to the local containers, and wherein the detector is operable to generate a signal to the flow controller (via control console 62) to control the flow of the solution to the first container (see column 3, line 59 to column 4, line 37), and a detector (items 58 and 60) for monitoring the solution level within the auxiliary container, wherein the detector is operable to generate a signal to the flow controller (via control console 62) in response to the monitored solution level of the auxiliary such that the solution level in the local container is maintained within a predetermined range of levels (as defined by sensors 58 and 60).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

15. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

16. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

17. Claims 1-3, 5-7 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Paul (US 4,192, 252) in view of Switall (US Patent 4,637,341).

Paul discloses an applicator capable of applying at least a partial coating of a solution to a filament comprising an applicator surface (item 14), a first container (item 24) operable to supply the solution (item 6) to the applicator surface, the volume of the solution of the container corresponding to a solution level in the container.

Paul does not disclose a second container or detector as claimed.

Switall, which uses an applicator capable of applying at least a partial coating of a solution to a filament comprising an applicator surface (either of item 12 or 14), and a first container (item 24 or 26) operable to supply the solution (item 10) to the applicator surface, the volume of the solution of the container corresponding to a solution level in the container, discloses the further improvement of a second container (item 22) operable to contain a supply of solution in fluid communication with the solution in the first container such that the solution in the second container has a solution level indicative of the solution level in the first container, and a detector (items 58 and 60) for determining the solution level within the second container, the detector operable to control an adjustment of the volume of the solution in the first container such that the solution level in the first container is maintained within a predetermined range of levels. In column 1 and column 2, Switall discloses numerous benefits for utilizing the extra containers and detectors along with the other improvements disclosed. Switall also

Art Unit: 1734

discloses supply containers (item 16 and 18) and flow controllers (items 42, 46, and 48, plus items 52, 54 and 50a and 50b, plus items 32, 38, 36, 40 and 33, 33a, 33b and 37, 37a, and 37b - see rejection of claim 27 above). Switall discloses (column 1, line 35-39) that the containers, detectors plus the flow control elements and supply containers as a whole improve control over the quantity of, the components of, and the application of the solution. Furthermore, one in the art would immediately appreciate that the sensors improve the control over the supply of solution the first container (item 24/26 of Switall, item 24 of Paul) since the level in the second container is indicative of the level in the first containers. It is also very apparent that the addition of the detector and second container (as well as the further improvements disclosed in Switall of the supply means 16 and 18) reduce the downtime of the apparatus by allowing for continual operation while maintaining the solution supply. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have utilized the second container and detector structures as in Switall in the overall apparatus of Paul in order to improve control over coating apparatus.

As to claim 2, Paul further discloses that the filament is a glass filament, and the solution is a glass sizing solution (column 1, lines 7-13).

As to claim 3, Switall as applied in claim 1 above discloses that the sensors are mechanical detectors.

As to claim 5, Switall as applied in claim 1 above discloses that the flow controller elements (items 42, 46, 48, 52, 50a, 54, and 50b as well as items 32, 38, 36, 40, 33, 33a, 33b, 37, 37a, and 37b) which is positioned between a source of the solution (items

Art Unit: 1734

16 and 18) to permit flow of the solution from the source to the first container, and wherein the detector is operable to generate a signal to the flow controller (via control console 62) to control the flow of the solution to the first container (see column 3, line 59 to column 4, line 37).

As to claim 6, Switall as applied in claim 1 above discloses that the first container contains an overflow level (which can be defined as the top of either container 24 or 26), and a range of levels below the overflow level (which can be defined as the top of pipe entrances 56a and 56b, plus the levels of sensors 60 and 58). Alternatively, the top of pipe entrances 56a and 56b can be defined as the overflow levels, and the sensor levels 60 and 58 can be the range of levels below the overflow level (note that pipe entrances 56a and 56b lead to pipe 56, which empties into container 22 above the sensors 60 and 58).

As to claim 7, Switall as applied in claim 1 above discloses that the overflow level, when interpreted as the absolute height of the container, is operable such that any solution exceeding the overflow level is prevented from returning to the first container by spilling out.

As to claim 27, Paul discloses an apparatus capable of supplying and applying at least a partial coating of a solution to a filament, comprising a local container a volume of the solution in the local container corresponding to a solution level in the local container, and an applicator surface operable to receive the solution from the local container and capable of applying an at least partial coating of the solution on to a filament.

As to claim 27, Switall discloses a main container (either items 16 or 18) which is operable to supply a solution, a local container (items 24 or 26) in fluid communication with the main container (via the auxiliary container and flow controllers described below), an auxiliary container (item 22) operable to contain a supply of solution in fluid communication with the solution in a first container such that the solution in the auxiliary container has a solution level indicative of the solution level in the first container, flow controller elements (items 42, 46, 48, 52, 50a, 54, and 50b as well as items 32, 38, 36, 40, 33, 33a, 33b, 37, 37a, and 37b) which is positioned between the main containers (items 16 and 18) and the local containers (items 24 and 26) to control the flow of the solution from the main containers to the local containers, and wherein the detector is operable to generate a signal to the flow controller (via control console 62) to control the flow of the solution to the first container (see column 3, line 59 to column 4, line 37), and a detector (items 58 and 60) for monitoring the solution level within the auxiliary container, wherein the detector is operable to generate a signal to the flow controller (via control console 62) in response to the monitored solution level of the auxiliary such that the solution level in the local container is maintained within a predetermined range of levels (as defined by sensors 58 and 60). Switall discloses (column 1, line 35-39) that the containers, detectors plus the flow control elements and supply containers as a whole improve control over the quantity of, the components of, and the application of the solution. Furthermore, one in the art would immediately appreciate that the sensors improve the control over the supply of solution the first container (item 24/26 of Switall, item 24 of Paul) since the level in the second container is indicative of the level in the

Art Unit: 1734

first containers. It is also very apparent that the addition of the detector and second container (as well as the further improvements disclosed in Switall of the supply means 16 and 18) reduce the downtime of the apparatus by allowing for continual operation while maintaining the solution supply. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have utilized the second container and detector structures as in Switall in the overall apparatus of Paul in order to improve control over coating apparatus.

18. Claims 3 and 4 are alternatively rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Switall as applied to claim 1 or alternatively over Paul and Switall as applied above, and further in view of Akimoto et al (US patent 5,405,443).

Switall as applied to claim 1 above does not disclose using an energy wave detector or a non-surface contacting detector.

Akimoto discloses that it is known to use an optical detector (which is a non-surface contacting detector that identifies energy waves in the visual region) for monitoring the level of a solution in a coating apparatus (see, for example, column 6, line 55 to column 7, line 9). One in the art would appreciate that an optical detector such as Akimoto would allow for indication of a range of levels, rather than the two level indication that Switall's mechanical sensors provide. Such a range of indication allows for tighter control over the height of the coating supply level, improving the control over amount of coating solution applied, whether by spraying or solid application. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention

Art Unit: 1734

to have utilized the optical detector of Akimoto for monitoring the supply of coating solution over the detector of Switall in order to provide greater control over the coating solution application.

Furthermore, the selection of an electrical detector, an ultrasonic detector and a magnetic detector is obvious in view of Akimoto's optical detector. All are well known equivalents of an optical detector in that they sense the level without the need for contacting the solution supply. One in the art would be motivated to select whatever detector best suits the solution being used.

19. Claims 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Paul and Switall as applied to claim 1 and 27 above, and further in view of Reese (US Patent 3,920,431).

Paul discloses that applicator can be an endless belt but is silent as to the structure of the endless belt. One in the art would immediately appreciate that Paul intends for any conventional endless belt for coating fibers with sizing or binding solutions to be used.

Reese discloses such a conventional endless belt (items 6, 7, and 8) known at the time of Paul's invention. Reese discloses that the endless belt comprises a first and second support (items 6 and 7), the first support (item 7) at least partially positionable below the solution level and the second support positionable adjacent to a contact area between the applicator surface and the filament. One in the art would appreciate that Reese discloses a conventional endless belt applicator capable be used with Paul's

Art Unit: 1734

invention, and would use such a conventional endless belt to provide the applicator surface. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have utilized the conventional endless belt of Reese in the invention of Paul as Paul intends for any conventional endless belt system in the field of filament application to be used.

As to the positioning the applicator surface exit the solution at a constant angle in claim 9, official notice is taken that doing so is well known and conventional as it would further reduce "throwoff" of the solution from the applicator surface and improve control over the solution. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have utilized such a conventional constant angle as it would improve control of the coating operation.

20. Claims 10-13, 15, 17-19, 28, 30, 31 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Paul, Switall and Reese as applied to claim 8, 9 and 27 above, and further in view of Schweppe (US Paten 3,848,565).

As to claim 10, Paul discloses shielding (item 12, housing container, best viewed in Figure 1) which covers the first container. However, Paul is silent as to how much of the first container is covered and as to the capabilities of the container.

Schweppe discloses a shield (item 3, called a housing) that covers the first container and is capable of directing excess liquid on the shielding away from the solution in the first container. Schweppe further discloses an opening from wherein the applicator surface projects such that the filament is contactable with the applicator

Art Unit: 1734

surface at the opening. One in the art would appreciate that the shielding both prevent excess external liquid from dripping into the container and excess internal solution from exiting the container (column 1, lines 58-65). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to utilize such a shield to prevent solution from escaping and improve maximum size and binder buildup.

As to claim 11, Switall as applied to claims 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 discloses the overflow level, the flow controller and detector operation as claimed (see above).

As to claim 12, Paul discloses the filament can be a glass filament and the solution is a glass fiber sizing composition.

As to claim 13, Paul with the modifications of Schweppe would have side walls and a top wall as claimed (see especially Figure 2 of Schweppe, which shows a front view). The spacing between the upper edge and the lower edge defines the opening.

As to claim 15, Paul with the modifications of Schweppe would have at least one wall extending over the container as claimed (see especially Figure 2 of Schweppe, which shows a front view). As seen in Figure 2 of Schweppe, one of the edges define at least one edge of the opening.

As to claim 17, the portion of the one wall of Schweppe extends over at least a portion of the applicator surface (best viewed in Figure 1 of Schweppe).

Claim 18 is rejected on similar grounds as claim 10 above. Paul and Reese as applied to claim 10 and its parent claims (especially claim 1) discloses the applicator surface and container. Switall as applied in claim 10 and its parent claims (see

Art Unit: 1734

especially claim 1) discloses the detector structures as claimed. Schweppe discloses the shielding, as applied in claim 10 above.

As to claim 19, Switall as applied above discloses that any solution exceeding the overflow level is prevent from returning to the first container. Reese discloses the endless belt as claimed in the rejection of claim 10 and its parent claim 8. As to the positioning the applicator surface exit the solution at a constant angle in claim 19, official notice is taken that doing so is well known and conventional as it would further reduce "throwoff" of the solution from the applicator surface and improve control over the solution. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have utilized such a conventional constant angle as it would improve control of the coating operation.

Claims 28, 30, 31 and 32 are rejected as in claim 10 and its parent claims above. Paul (as applied in the rejection of claim 27 above) and Reese as applied above discloses the container and applicator. Switall as applied in claim 27 above and especially its parent claim 1, discloses using the main container, the auxiliary container, the flow positioner and detector as claimed, and discloses motivation for incorporating these elements. Schweppe as applied in claim 10 above discloses the shielding. As to the positioning the applicator surface exit the solution at a constant angle in claim 32, official notice is taken that doing so is well known and conventional as it would further reduce "throwoff" of the solution from the applicator surface and improve control over the solution. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at

Art Unit: 1734

the time of the invention to have utilized such a conventional constant angle as it would improve control of the coating operation.

21. Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Paul, Switall, Reese and Schweppe as applied to claim 10 above, and further in view of Evans (US Patent 3,401,542).

Paul, Switall, Reese and Schweppe as applied to claim 10 above do disclose at least one wall defining a top wall of the first container, the top wall further comprising a lower edge defining an upper end of the opening (see especially Schweppe, Figure 2).

Paul, Switall, Reese and Schweppe as applied to claim 10 above do not disclose the gutter along a top wall such that the gutter carries liquid away.

Evans discloses a gutter like structure (item 17, Figure 1) above a filament coating structure and a coating container (items 12, 11, 11a and 18, 18a and 19).

Evans discloses that this gutter prevents external liquid, while still originally from the first container, from falling back into the main chamber. One in the art would appreciate that such a gutter reduces potential contamination of the solution supply. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have utilized a gutter as in Evans in order to reduce contamination of the solution supply and improve coating quality.

Art Unit: 1734

22. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Paul, Switall, Reese and Schweppe as applied to claim 15 above, and further in view of Schmandt (US Patent 4,192,663)

Paul, Switall, Reese and Schweppe as applied to claim 10 above do not disclose a deflector positioned as claimed for directing external liquid away from the opening.

Schmandt discloses a deflector like structure (item 172, 174 and 176, Figure 2) above a filament coating structure and a coating container (items 102). Schmandt discloses that this deflector helps provide a degree of protection for the applicator assembly (column 4, lines 44-68), and would be capable of directing excess liquid away from the opening. One in the art would appreciate that such a deflector reduces potential contamination of the solution supply. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have utilized a deflector as in Schmandt in order to protect the applicator assembly, as well as reduce contamination of the solution supply and improve coating quality.

23. Claims 20 and 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Switall as applied to claim 18 or alternatively over Paul, Switall, Reese and Schweppe as applied to claims 18 or 28 above, and further in view of Akimoto et al (US patent 5,405,443).

Switall as applied to claim 18, or Paul, Switall, Reese and Schweppe as applied to claims 18 or 28 above does not disclose a non-surface contacting detector.

Akimoto discloses that it is known to use an optical detector (which is a non-surface contacting detector that identifies energy waves in the visual region) for monitoring the level of a solution in a coating apparatus (see, for example, column 6, line 55 to column 7, line 9). One in the art would appreciate that an optical detector such as Akimoto would allow for indication of a range of levels, rather than the two level indication that Switall's mechanical sensors provide. Such a range of indication allows for tighter control over the height of the coating supply level, improving the control over amount of coating solution applied, whether by spraying or solid application. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have utilized the optical detector of Akimoto for monitoring the supply of coating solution over the detector of Switall in order to provide greater control over the coating solution application.

24. Claims 28, 30, and 31 are alternatively rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Switall as applied to claim 27 above, and further in view of Schweppe.

Switall does not disclose a shield as claimed.

Schweppe discloses a shielding (item 3, called a housing) that covers the first container and is capable of directing excess liquid on the shielding away from the solution in the first container. Schweppe further discloses an opening from wherein the applicator surface projects such that the filament is contactable with the applicator surface at the opening. One in the art would appreciate that the shielding both prevent

Art Unit: 1734

excess external liquid from dripping into the container and excess internal solution from exiting the container (column 1, lines 58-65). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to utilize such a shield to prevent solution from escaping and improve maximum size and binder buildup.

As to claim 30, the apparatus is capable of coating a glass filament with a glass fiber sizing composition.

As to claim 31, Switall discloses that the first container contains an overflow level (which can be defined as the top of either container 24 or 26), and a range of levels below the overflow level (which can be defined as the top of pipe entrances 56a and 56b, plus the levels of sensors 60 and 58). Alternatively, the top of pipe entrances 56a and 56b can be defined as the overflow levels, and the sensor levels 60 and 58 can be the range of levels below the overflow level (note that pipe entrances 56a and 56b lead to pipe 56, which empties into container 22 above the sensors 60 and 58).

25. Claims 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Switall and Schweppe as applied to claim 28 above, and further in view of Akimoto et al (US patent 5,405,443).

Switall and Schweppe as applied to claim 28 above does non-surface contacting detector.

Akimoto discloses that it is known to use an optical detector (which is a non-surface contacting detector that identifies energy waves in the visual region) for

Art Unit: 1734

monitoring the level of a solution in a coating apparatus (see, for example, column 6, line 55 to column 7, line 9). One in the art would appreciate that an optical detector such as Akimoto would allow for indication of a range of levels, rather than the two level indication that Switall's mechanical sensors provide. Such a range of indication allows for tighter control over the height of the coating supply level, improving the control over amount of coating solution applied, whether by spraying or solid application. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have utilized the optical detector of Akimoto for monitoring the supply of coating solution over the detector of Switall in order to provide greater control over the coating solution application.

26. Claims 21-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Paul and Reese (US Patent 3,920,431).

Paul discloses a container as claimed, and also discloses that applicator can be an endless belt but is silent as to the structure of the endless belt. One in the art would immediately appreciate that Paul intends for any conventional endless belt for coating fibers with sizing or binding solutions to be used.

Reese discloses such a conventional endless belt (items 6, 7, and 8) known at the time of Paul's invention. Reese discloses that the endless belt comprises a first and second support (items 6 and 7), the first support (item 7) at least partially positionable below the solution level and the second support positionable adjacent to a contact area between the applicator surface and the filament. One in the art would appreciate that

Art Unit: 1734

Reese discloses a conventional endless belt applicator capable be used with Paul's invention, and would use such a conventional endless belt to provide the applicator surface. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have utilized the conventional endless belt of Reese in the invention of Paul as Paul intends for any conventional endless belt system in the field of filament application to be used.

Reese is silent as to whether the supports have at least one adjuster for adjusting the position of at least one support.

Official notice is taken that the use of adjusters is well known and conventional in belt coating. One in the art would appreciate that adjusters would provide further control over the coating application, and that the use of adjustment structures in general can adjust tolerances. Such an adjuster would allow for adjustment of the coating application due to environmental and coating conditions. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have incorporated the adjusters in order to improve control over the coating operating.

As to claim 22, Paul discloses that the filament is a glass filament and the solution is a glass fiber sizing composition. In any event, the apparatus is capable of coating the claimed fibers with the claimed solution.

As to claim 23 and 25, the belt of Reese appears to be between the claimed angle.

As to claim 24 and 25, Paul and Reese as combined are capable of using using a solution such that the thickness is in claimed range.

As to claim 26, Reese discloses the reverse situation, with a second diameter smaller than the first diameter. Official notice is taken that the use of various sizes and ratio of sizes for the rollers is well with the skill of one in the art. One in the art would appreciate that various diameters and diameter ratios would improve the control over the coating process, especially by changing the relative angles of one belt of the applicator. One in the art would be motivated to choose such an angle and the appropriate ratio by routine experimentation and analysis of the desired coating properties. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to include a ratio as claimed either as a result of routine experimentation or from a desire for greater control over the coating operation.

27. Claim 33 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Switall and Schweppe.

Switall discloses an apparatus capable of supplying and applying at least a partial coating of a solution to a filament, comprising a main container (either items 16 or 18) which is operable to supply a solution, a local container (items 24 or 26) in fluid communication with the main container (via the auxiliary container and flow controllers described below) for receiving the solution from the main container, a volume of the solution in the local container corresponding to a solution level in the local container, an applicator surface (either of items 12 or 14) operable to receive the solution from the local container and capable of applying an at least partial coating of the solution on to a filament, an auxiliary container (item 22) operable to contain a supply of solution in fluid

Art Unit: 1734

communication with the solution in the first container such that the solution in the auxiliary container has a solution level indicative of the solution level in the first container, flow controller elements (items 42, 46, 48, 52, 50a, 54, and 50b as well as items 32, 38, 36, 40, 33, 33a, 33b, 37, 37a, and 37b) which is positioned between the main containers (items 16 and 18) and the local containers (items 24 and 26) to control the flow of the solution from the main containers to the local containers, and wherein the detector is operable to generate a signal to the flow controller (via control console 62) to control the flow of the solution to the first container (see column 3, line 59 to column 4, line 37), and a detector (items 58 and 60) for monitoring the solution level within the auxiliary container, wherein the detector is operable to generate a signal to the flow controller (via control console 62) in response to the monitored solution level of the auxiliary such that the solution level in the local container is maintained within a predetermined range of levels (as defined by sensors 58 and 60).

Switall does not disclose a shielding as claimed.

Schweppe discloses a shielding (item 3, called a housing) that covers the first container and is capable of directing excess liquid on the shielding away from the solution in the first container. Schweppe further discloses an opening from wherein the applicator surface projects such that the filament is contactable with the applicator surface at the opening. One in the art would appreciate that the shielding both prevent excess external liquid from dripping into the container and excess internal solution from exiting the container (column 1, lines 58-65). Therefore, it would have been obvious to


Art Unit: 1734

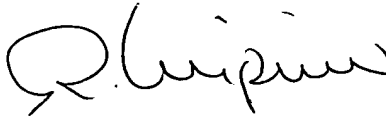
one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to utilize such a shield to prevent solution from escaping and improve maximum size and coating buildup.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to George R. Koch III whose telephone number is (703) 305-3435 (TDD only). If the applicant cannot make a direct TDD-to-TDD call, the applicant can communicate by calling the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 and giving the operator the above TDD number. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 10-7.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Crispino can be reached on (703) 308-3853. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 305-7718 for regular communications and (703) 305-3599 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.


George R. Koch III
January 22, 2003


RICHARD CRISPINO
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 1734